



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February 7, 2005
NR05-007

GAG STUDY SEEKS COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN MARCH and APRIL 2005

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service) are conducting a life history study on gag ("gray") grouper (*Mycteroperca microlepis*). Samples are needed for March and April (the spawning season closure). We are seeking eight fishermen to help provide samples of whole fish in this cooperative research.

- Fishermen must have a current snapper/grouper permit.
- Gag may only be landed in the following states and counties): North Carolina (Carteret, New Hanover, and/or Brunswick counties), South Carolina (Horry, Georgetown, and/or Charleston counties), Florida (St. Johns and/or Volusia counties).
- Fishermen will be selected by lottery from the pool of applicants. If a selected fisherman is unable to perform the tasks, another individual will be randomly selected.
- All fishermen expressing interest in this project will be reviewed by the NOAA Fisheries Service Enforcement Division for any fishery violations; violations will disqualify the fisherman from participating.
- Selected fishermen will be included in a Letter of Acknowledgement (LOA).
- Selected fishermen will be limited by the participating biologist to landing a specific number of gag per trip. Selected fishermen must notify the participating biologist and receive their approval prior to landing gag. They also must land the gag in one of the counties listed above.
- Gag cannot be sold during a closed season. Therefore, during the closed season, SCDNR will pay \$3.75/lb for whole gag caught by selected fishermen. An authorized biologist must be present when selected fishermen bring gag to the dock. All gag landed during the closed season must be delivered to selected charities after biological samples have been removed.
- The total number of gag landed and sampled per month (March and April) will be 400-450. Once the quota has been met, no more gag will be accepted.

- All fishermen that are approved for the LOA and agree to the above conditions will be contacted regarding participation.

If interested in participating in this study, please fax (843-953-9820) the following information by February 18, 2005, to B. White, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, Marine Resources Research Institute.

Captain's Name:

Address:

Phone number:

Vessel name:

USCG Doc. No. (or State No.):

Vessel owner (if different from Captain):

Address:

Phone Number:

The NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving the nation's living marine resources and their habitats through scientific research, management, and enforcement. The NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources.

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The NOAA Fisheries Service is an agency of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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NR05-007